

Introduction

The U.S. House of Representatives established the Committee on Science and Technology more than 50 years ago. As one of the newer committees on Capitol Hill, it has a long history of bipartisanship and tackling some of the most important challenges facing the nation. The Committee successfully oversaw the reorganization of the space program and ensured NASA met its goal of landing a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s. During the difficult times of the 1970s, the House gave the Committee new jurisdiction in the energy and emerging environmental fields. With a further expansion of responsibilities in the 1980s and 1990s, the Committee's legislative and oversight work included a wide assortment of technology issues as well as intellectual property rights, homeland security, and the development of super-computers and the Internet. In the 21st century the Committee had to confront natural and manmade disasters as well as maintain the nation's technological lead in the sciences and education.

The first written history of the Committee covered the period from its inception through 1979. It was an all encompassing review prepared by subcommittee Chairman Ken Hechler of West Virginia. The work reflected firsthand knowledge of the major events, legislation passed, the Members who served on the Committee and the expert staff assembled to help them in their work. Through the use of its extensive table of contents and epilogue, the researcher can review the wide-ranging activities of the Committee and read extensive quotes by the principals.

When preparing this updated history of the Committee, it was readily apparent that an entirely different approach had to be developed to recount the significant events of the past 50 years. In writing this edition, the authors felt it important not to overburden the reader with a long narrative. Since this project would be done by individuals outside the Committee, Hechler's approach could not be repeated. The new format would be multifaceted and focus on the nature of the Committee's legislative efforts and the presentation of short biographies of each committee chairman.

The landmark legislation component of the project formed the necessary framework for the narrative, but it was insufficient to provide a full picture of the Committee's history. To better understand the Committee's activities and areas of inquiry, the project included a complete review of its jurisdictional history, which afforded the authors the necessary structure as to the scope of the Committee's responsibilities. We made the decision to list all of the full and joint Committee hearings and a review of all the subcommittee hearings in an effort to provide future scholars with the foundation for additional research on the Committee.

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